

17 March 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR: Staff Chiefs

SUBJECT : Terms of Reference for NIE's

1. This is a suggestion concerning Terms of Reference. It may be worth trying; it won't work in all cases, even if it does in some. I do not see it as applying to the routine military NIE's.

2. It has struck me that in the matter of TR's we frequently get mixed up among three things: (a) Terms of Reference proper; (b) an outline of the projected NIE; (c) a list of questions on which information or argument is necessary in order to write the NIE. My suggestion is simply to submit, as the customary "Terms of Reference" a document in two parts, as follows:

a. Part I. Terms of Reference. The purpose is strictly to set forth what the NIE is to cover. It will be worth trying to put this in the form of an outline -- a brief one -- of the paper itself. The Board can then discuss the NIE's structure as well as its coverage (though draftees should not be held too rigidly to the outline). Sometimes the TR's may best be done in a connected essay of a few paragraphs; i.e., not as an outline. A Scope or Prefatory Note may or may not be desirable, but somehow it is probably well to set forth (1) why the NIE is being written, and (2) what it is not going to cover. And a Statement of the Problem may or may not be called for.

b. Part II. Questions Bearing on the Problem (or some such title). This section is the specific basis for contributions, whether oral or written. And it may sometimes be a good thing to have such a section (for Board discussion) even if no contributions are solicited. But, anyway, it can be constructed without appearing to be either an outline of the NIE, or a definition of what the NIE is to cover. For example, there may be no need for questions on some aspects of the TR's -- or there may be need for questions on matters which the NIE will not cover.

GROUP 1

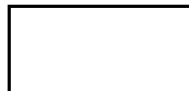
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3. I think the Terms of Reference should normally run to no more than about two pages. The Questions section can be long or short as required.

4. If this appeals to anybody, please try it out; if not, forget it.



ABBOT SMITH

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